In the Beginning...

Robin

Those of you who attended the "Opening the Sky" ritual at Dragonfest this year probably realized that a large part of it was a Creation Myth. At the Manhood Ritual on Friday night, Thomas's Circle Invocation was also a Creation Myth, although a very brief one. Perhaps it is in the stars, but I have been thinking about a Pagan Creation Myth for several months now and perhaps this is as good a time as any to publish it. The basic idea originally came when some people complained that science didn't have any mystery or poetic power in its formulations. That is not really true, it is just that not enough scientists are trained to write well, or encouraged to present new knowledge in a form that will appeal to all levels of our minds. Well, I decided to have a go at it, and the following myth is based pretty closely on modern cosmology and evolutionary theory.

In the beginning there was neither matter nor energy, neither was there space nor time, force and form were not. Yet there was Something. Poised between Spirit and Void, without form or qualities, pure potentiality, the first physical manifestation had existence. Scientists call it the Primordial Singularity, occultists call it the Cosmic Egg.

It changed, and the first moment of time came to be. It expanded, and space was born. Not the space we know, but one of many dimensions, and that space was filled with the first Force. So intense was that Force that space itself altered. Dimensions folded back on themselves, while others expanded mightily. The first Form came to be. As the infant universe expanded it changed subtly, and as naturally as snowflakes forming in the air, the first material manifestation precipitated out of nothingness. Neither matter nor energy as we know them, but yet both. The Element Fire was born. The universe continued to expand, and the one Force became two forces, then three and finally four. Matter and energy became distinguishable, and the Element Earth was born from Fire. A hundred thousand years went by, and the universe continued to expand and cool until, quite suddenly, the fire died, space became transparent to light, and there were great clouds of cool gas, moving freely.

The Element Air was born. The clouds began to draw together, then break apart into smaller clouds, and smaller still, until a limit was reached, and a hundred thousand clouds collapsed inward upon themselves, swirling and twisting, flattening and smoothing, rippling, and organizing themselves. The Element Water was born.

One cloud, like many of its siblings, took on a structure like a great pinwheel, with spiral arms stretching out from its center. It was Galaxias, our Milky Way. Within its turbulent swirling, smaller eddies formed and contracted, tighter and tighter. At the center of one a spark grew bright then another and another. The first stars were lighted, and

shown in a universe grown dark. Many of them burned prodigally for a time and then exploded, hurling the ashes of their burning outward, ashes such as oxygen and carbon and nitrogen; star stuff, life stuff. Generations of stars came and went over the billions of years, and out in one of the spiral arms a cloud of gas and dust began to collapse like so many others before. It contracted, and a new star lighted, with a disc of dust and gas circling it. The disc became lumpy as grains of dust and crystals of ice collided and stuck together. The lumps touched and merged, ever growing in the light of the young star. Finally, nine bodies circled the new star, which would one day be called Sol, or simply, the Sun. Third out from the sun a rare event had happened. Two young planets had collided and merged violently, forming a single planet. In the violence of that collision, part of the surfaces of both had been ripped off and hurled out to form a ring of molten rock which quickly drew together to form a giant satellite. The Earth and the Moon had been born in a passionate joining.

As the young Earth cooled, great volcanoes belched forth gases from its still hot interior. An atmosphere of steam and carbon dioxide formed and then clouds appeared. The first rains began, pouring down on the rocks and washing down into the low places. The oceans were born. Water evaporated from the oceans and fell again as rain, dissolving minerals from the rocks and carrying them into the sea. The early ocean became richer and richer in dissolved minerals and gases. Lightning in the young atmosphere formed new substances which added to the complexity of the mix. The dissolved substances in the oceans became more and more complex, until one day a complex molecule attracted simpler compounds to itself, and then there were two, then four. Life was born.

From its simple origins, Life grew in complexity, until one day a patch of green appeared, drawing energy from the Sun, and exuding oxygen. Within a short time the atmosphere changed radically. The sky became blue, the air clear and rich in oxygen. As the Earth had shaped Life, so Life began to shape the Earth. Delicately balancing and ever re-balancing between the furnace heat of her sister Venus, and the icy cold of her brother Mars, Gaia, the Living Earth, had come to be.

The first animals appeared and swam in the oceans. Then venturesome ones crawled onto the land. The forms taken by life changed. Fish appeared, and dragons walked the land. Tiny furred creatures supplanted the great dragons, whose descendants now flew through the skies, clothed in feathers. By and by some of the furred creatures came down from the trees and began to walk about on their hind legs, and then they started picking things up. Soon they were using the things they picked up. Then they started talking to each other. After they had been talking for a while, they started thinking. Some of them even started thinking about where they had come from and where they were going. And they began to wonder how everything had come to be - and why.

Well, there it is. Now that it's written I'm wondering what it all means. You who read this have as much right to interpret it as the author, who after all is mostly gathering the thoughts and conclusions of other men and women and putting them into a hopefully attractive package. Creation myths are supposed to tell us something about the world we live in and our relationship with that world, and perhaps about ourselves. This one seems to be telling us that the world in which we live was not made, like a clock, it grew, like an embryo in an egg. We humans are as much a part of our world as the eye of an embryo is part of the embryo. We are the part of the world that "sees". And what about the Gods? Where do they fit into all this? Well, eggs generally have a mother and a father, and newborn chicks aren't aware of either until they open their eyes. We are the eyes of our world, and one of our functions is to see the Mother and Father.

by: Robin

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